DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 120 766 CS 202 623

TITLE Viewpoints: Controversy in Content and Materials in Schools.
INSTITUTION Georgia State Dept. of Education, Atlanta. Office of Instructional Services.
PUB DATE 73
NOTE 18p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Freedom; *Censorship; *Course Content; Curriculum Evaluation; *Democratic Values; Educational Responsibility; Freedom of Speech; Moral Values; Secondary Education; Student Rights; Teacher Role; *Textbook Content; Textbook Selection

ABSTRACT

An argument is presented in this booklet for the formal study of controversial issues and materials in public secondary schools. The democratic ideal of freedom of discussion is cited as justification for this stance. Included in the examination of issues are discussions of: (1) the democratic point of view as it relates to educational goals, (2) the student's right to study controversial topics, (3) guidelines for the evaluation of controversial publications and productions, (4) the role of the teacher in planning and administering curriculum, and (5) suggestions for screening instructional material. Appendixes include further comment on both American and world-wide social values, discussion of school policies and procedures for selection of instructional materials, and a typical formal complaint form for questioned items. (KS)

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VIEWPOINTS

CONTROVERSY IN CONTENT AND MATERIALS IN SCHOOLS

CS 202 623

Division of Curriculum Development and
Pupil Personnel Services
Office of Instructional Services
Georgia Department of Education
1973

Atlanta, Georgia 30334

TYRANNY - THE VOICE IS SILENCE
(Source - unknown)

"No man is an Island, entire of it selfe; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the Main; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any man's Death diminishes Me, because I am involved in Mankind: And therefore never send to know for whom the Bell tolls; It tolls for Thee. - John Donne's Seventeenth Devotion

Tyranny always means the slavery of the body, the smothering of the spirit, the dread knock on the door at night, pain, poverty, disease, death. More than a century ago Stendhal said this: "What counts is not the personality of the tyrant but the essence of tyranny. A tyrant may be intelligent or stupid, good or evil – but whatever the case, he is both all-powerful and powerless, he is frightened by conspiracies, he is flattered, he is deceived. The prisons fill, the cowardly hypocrites whisper, and the silence becomes so complete that the heart almost stops."

The words of Stendhal describe what is happening and has happened to thousands of human beings. A tree may serve today to make a house and another may be used tomorrow to erect a gallows or to shape a cross.

It is sometimes easy for free men to think that all human beings must believe in freedom. They have not in the past. They do not now. For them the dictator, the tyrant, the master of the masses, always lie in wait.

"He sitteth lurking in the thievish corners of the streets and privily in his lurking dens doth he murder the innocent; his eyes are set against the poor . . ."[3]

[3]*Great Ideas of Western Man Series*, Container Corp. of America, Chicago, Ill., 1950-67.

INTRODUCTION

Controversial topics, issues, problems, language and the like have always been delicate situations to handle in the school environment. The tendency in schools has been to avoid formal study of these volatile areas and stay with safe topics. Recently newspapers, television, motion pictures and other media have moved to stimulate conversation about controversial topics, and the media approach in itself has become controversial. Many instructional materials which present a problem are being presented for use in schools. They may insert a brief section or scene seemingly without reason or with definite reason of propaganda, do not cite all data or viewpoints, slant by selection, or use the most subtle devices for selling an idea.

The current legal uncertainties of determining obscene incidents or salacious language have imposed moral questions upon school systems which can be explosive. Both moral and spiritual values are involved and as a consequence the reactions of various persons and groups may tend to be determined, or rigid, or devoid of tolerance, at least, the beliefs or feelings will not be peripheral.

POINT OF VIEW

In a democratic society, one must start with the basic values of the group, examine those according to likeness and diversity, and devise a learning environment which promotes the intelligent, active citizen. (See appendix for discussion of values.) Above all, individuals in a society are concerned with values. Each society has different values, and its citizens generally accept these values or ideals and seek to further their achievement. In our society in the United States there has been general agreement that the following are major goals, ideals, or values.

Respect for the individual
Cooperation in group processes
Faith in intelligence to solve individual and group problems
Belief that power rests with the people

In the achievement of the major goals of a democracy, it is both inevitable and desirable that certain questions or problems will arise about which people will hold varying and different convictions. Important problems in politics, economics, government, science, literature and the other school studies including moral and spiritual values will always be before us. Because they involve change or conflicts in interests, cherished beliefs, traditional practices and loyalties to persons or groups, they become controversial issues. These issues of a necessity must be considered in the classroom either formally or informally.

One of the major ideals of democracy is to produce intelligence in individuals and resultantly in groups. It is through a study of ideas, issues, problems or topics from a base of values as they are analyzed that American youth will develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes so necessary in solving the continuing problems arising from a changing social scene. It is the very essence of the democratic process to provide for a mature and free discussion of controversial issues. Most secondary school youth, particularly in the senior high school, have the maturity to profit from a consideration of controversial ideas and issues as they experience them both in actual situations and from seeing, reading and listening.

CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES, PROBLEMS, TOPICS: PROCESS

The schools do not teach controversial issues but rather provide opportunities for their study. The schools teach the American heritage (our developing values, freedoms, responsibilities and actions) and, in doing this, provide opportunities for students to study controversial ideas and issues under careful and competent guidance. For example, students study other forms of government, such as communism and fascism, in order for students to learn in an explicit manner the values of American democracy. By contrast the ideals and actions of the American way of life are highlighted more clearly to students. Students, according to their maturity, learn to analyze problems and issues, gather and organize pertinent facts, discriminate between fact and opinion, detect propaganda and prejudice, form intelligent conclusions, respect the opinions of others and abide by majority rule while protecting the rights of the minority. In the public schools, study of controversial topics is defined in terms of the rights of students rather than in terms of the rights of teachers. The student has four rights –

> The right to study any controversial issue concerning which (at his level) he is beginning (or should be) to have an opinion.
>
> The right to have free access to all pertinent information including materials that circulate freely in the community.
>
> The right to study under competent instruction in an atmosphere as free as possible from bias and prejudice.
>
> The right to form and express his own opinions on controversial issues without jeopardizing his relationships with teacher, school or community.

A recent publication of the National Education Association, entitled *Controversial Issues in the Classroom* (1961), discusses the teaching problems thoroughly giving examples of practices in various school systems. Teachers are urged to purchase or to check this pamphlet out from the school library and to read it carefully.

Historically, for example, the American Legion adopted in 1949 a resolution (291) recognizing that "instructors in these schools are placed in a most delicate position. They must develop the critical habit of their students. They must always seek the truth. At the same time, they must contribute a product in the form of legal, constructive, creative, law-abiding citizens." The resolution states further that "The intensity of the loyalty of the American soldier and citizen can be said to be based upon his own analysis and critique freely made. The free man must always base his loyalty upon his own solution or else he ceases to be free." In this resolution the American Legion listed five "Criteria for Evaluation of the Loyalty Factor as Expressed in Instructional Materials."

> 'In the study of democracy both its accomplishments and failures are examined. Social living is not based on perfectionism. Democracy has a brilliant record of accomplishments but these have often grown out of certain failures. Materials should show a certain balance in selection and organization of content.'
>
> 'In the treatment of the individual's relationship to government his obligations are stressed as well as his rights. Naturally the rights of the individual have been stressed in this country because we are a young republic that has but recently fought its way to freedom. It is easy for Americans to dwell only upon the rights of the individual who has the privilege of living in a free society. Materials of instruction which are prepared for wide usage should seek to show the interdependence existing between rights and obligations in a self-governing society.'

'In the presentation of the bitter truths of the history of democracy, an attempt is made to present constructive recommendations for preventing recurrence of the undesirable results described. Reactionary dictatorships build their propaganda upon the great scandals of democracy. Those interested in helping this country to improve democracy are privileged to review the past for failure but are obligated to use their findings for some constructive purpose. Muck-raking, for sensational purposes only, has no place in materials of instruction.'

'The materials help students to develop their own methods of propaganda analysis to be applied to all situations. The use of propaganda has become almost a science. It has grown with the great expansion of the means of communication. The greatest safe-guard against subversive propaganda is the equipping of every citizen in a free society with a critical mind and with skill in identifying the weapons of his antagonist - the propagandist. Even the author of materials might well warn against unconsidered acceptance of the opinions expressed in his own writing.'

'In dealing with controversial issues, both sides of the issue are fairly presented. The adult, and in like manner the person in school preparing for adulthood, live in a world of controversy and life does not present prepared solutions in this day and age, or for that matter any age. Hence, education has a tremendous task of developing the ability to analyze, the ability to discriminate between fact and wish, the ability to arrive cooperatively at working solutions, tentative though they may be. The student should learn to recognize his own prejudices as well as the prejudices of others. Instructional materials should be prepared with a full appreciation of the problem of the learner - the student who will use them. The author should seek to label generalizations as generalizations, opinions as opinions, and facts as facts. This does not mean that the author should not express his opinions. He is not in the same position in this respect as is the teacher. However, no partisan, sectarian, sectional, or factional bias should be expressed except as such bias be openly expressed and supported by objective data. While it may be assumed that any citizen may have bias toward democracy as such, it should be remembered that democracy itself cannot be supported except as one is able to prove that it is the best way of life.'

CONTROVERSIAL PUBLICATIONS AND PRODUCTIONS

Certain books, pamphlets, newspapers, films and so on can be as controversial as issues and problems. Such materials are often labeled "communistic, subversive, right-wing, left-wing, liberal, divisive, muck-raking, telling it like it is" and so on or, if not in the political or social realm, books can be classed "offensive, vulgar, risque, smutty" and the like. Further, some publications or productions present a particular point of view to the exclusion of other points of view.

Parents, teachers, school board members and citizens are reminded that ideas are not killed by suppression or by banning and burning printed materials. Any controversial publication can be controlled by careful study and intelligent handling. Again it is not the job of the school to teach controversial publications; the school can provide for their study if the necessity arises. Planning by teachers, both within the school and in the school system, and proper supervision are absolutely vital.

The American Textbook Publishers Institute has made some reasonable suggestions for those who would question certain books and learning aids.

Read the book. Your own good judgment should suffice to pass on the purpose of the book.

Look at the copyright and also notice if the book has been revised since it was copyrighted. It is wise to know the date since the author will in all likelihood reflect the allies and friendly nations of the United States at that time.

Ask the teacher about the book in question. The teacher will be able to explain the purpose in using the book.

Find out about the authors from all publications. There are actually a negligible number of proven communists in the nation's school systems. Use your own judgment as to the purpose of any publication.

Do not judge a book by single sentences quoted from it. The quotes are out of context. Get the whole meaning.

Ask who recommended the publication.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Planning within the school and within the school system is absolutely necessary if controversial content and instructional materials are to be included in any curriculum area. In so far as possible, professional personnel in the particular subject area should have outlined basically the content, process and materials in a curriculum guide for the school system. However, all contingencies cannot be met in a curriculum guide since the teacher is expected to develop learning upon the base of the guide. In the day to day developments of the class learning, policies and procedures should be outlined somewhat as follows in the system or local school guides.

If there is the possibility of controversy arising from the use of an idea or certain instructional materials, the teacher should notify the departmental chairman. Judgment is critical.

A conference should be arranged with the local school principal and the person responsible at the system level to discuss possible controversial content or ideas for instructional materials. A meeting with the School Media Committee should be conducted.

Criteria (hopefully prepared) for the use of the idea or materials should be applied, and a judgment should be made out of the conference or meeting.

If there are further judgmental reservations and recommendations, the superintendent of schools should be scheduled for a conference. A meeting with the System-wide Media Committee should be conducted. Final recommendations should be made to the superintendent.

The Local Board of Education should be notified of the prospective venture with the possible controversial idea or material.

Judgment as exercised by human beings varies widely, but it is inconceivable that a teacher would enter potentially dangerous instructional areas using controversial content or materials without having planned thoroughly with his professional associates and leadership personnel in the school and school system.

Having thoroughly planned his approach to controversial content and use of questionable materials, the teacher should keep in mind other procedural approaches in the classroom.

He must use the scientific method always in approaching an issue.

The teacher will certainly judge the maturity level of the student and timing in pursuing a study of a controversial issue.

He must avoid personalities in so far as possible. He should warn his students to avoid derogatory remarks about personalities above all.

He may state an opinion on a phase of the issue (his or others), but he must clearly state that it is an opinion.

He must protect himself by – not seeking to teach a point of view; creating an objective learning situation; seeking all available facts; and acquainting the departmental chairman and principal with the continuing development of the study.

In general the teacher has a professional obligation to refrain from taking a position in the classroom, even though he may have strong convictions about the problem. The teacher should be able to make a distinction between taking a position and expressing his personal opinions.

The teachers must be careful to avoid personalizing ideas or issues, such as sectarian religious beliefs, personal and family problems, individuals in the school or community, or specific manufactured products.

Finally, with the early adolescent student, and even the late adolescent, it is very wise to use specific facts, stories and events from which judgments and possible actions can be surmised. Generalizations alone as centers of discussion are usually unproductive with adolescent youth and often become exchanges of ignorance.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SCREENING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

It is increasingly becoming necessary for each school system to initiate a prescreening process for each item of instructional material. This, in all likelihood, will mean that each word, each picture, each point of view will have to be examined.

Basic selection criteria should be established upon which judgments will be executed. Judgment is a vague word, and so are the words "censorship", "selection", and "guidance"; yet, not to temper freedom with responsibility is to deny professional leadership.

Perhaps there are levels of reading or viewing maturity in instructional materials, both for students and the community, which should be established by a system-wide professional committee as a representative group of all teachers. This committee would also hear complaints from students, teachers and lay persons through a carefully outlined process (see appendices). The Boards of Education, local and statewide, have the final decision after the professional committees have made their recommendations.

Judgments of maturity levels can be made by the system-wide professional committee, such as – (1) *Textual-type*, for large percentages of students; (2) *Grade Placement*, elementary, junior high school, senior high school; (3)*Supplementary*, general media center distribution, classroom copies; (4) *Special*, advanced students, problems courses; (5) *Commercial Market*, all other publications available outside the school. The boundaries of these judgments are most difficult to delineate on paper. All personnel finally, however, should have a voice in the judgments of

materials. Criteria and procedures for the selection and use of instructional materials are carefully outlined in the publication *Viewpoints: Instructional Materials: Selection at State and Local Levels - Suggestions for Use*, 1969, State Department of Education, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Many large school systems are ordering or requesting for personal preview or examination each piece of instructional material which they will consider for prospective purchase and will buy only those they have determined to be suitable after actual examination. It may be that centers for the examination of new materials can be established in Atlanta, Statesboro and Tifton in connection with the State Film Libraries in the future. As a further source of information to the local school system committee, reviews by various professional groups and publications are of assistance, but again the widening diversity of opinions as to what is appropriate for school use makes reliance of reviews only risky. It seems there is no alternative other than the formal process of examining each instructional item by State and local professional personnel.

APPENDICES

A. Values

B. Values, World-Wide

C. Policies and Procedures for Selection of Instructional Materials

D. Typical Formal Complaint Form

APPENDIX A

VALUES

Above all, individuals in a society are concerned with values. Each society has different values, and its citizens generally accept these values or ideals and seek to further their achievement. In our society in the United States there has been general agreement that the following are major goals, ideals or values.

Respect for the individual
Cooperation in group processes
Faith in intelligence to solve individual and group problems
Belief that power rests with the people

From the standpoint of the basic American ideals or values, certain behavior for individuals who have grown up in the society is indicated. These items of behavior are not all-inclusive, but are major aspects of the behavior of maturing individuals.

Respect for the individual – Maturing individuals believe each person should have a chance for success; accept new persons in their association.; know and use appropriate social courtesies to all; are tolerant and patient with handicapped or immature persons; are aware of their own problems; can evaluate themselves; are creative and want to do their own work.

Cooperation in group processes – Maturing individuals show a feeling of responsibility for individual behavior in the group; know techniques of operating in a group; know techniques of leading a group; lack fear or timidity in speaking before a group; are a good audience; know how to conduct a discussion.

Faith in intelligence to solve individual and group problems – Maturing individuals can identify problems; do critical thinking about the problems; can plan effective ways to solve problems; seek information from the right person or source; know authors, books, and informational materials; know the fundamentals; love to read in school and afterwards; want to think for themselves.

Belief that power rests with the people – Maturing individuals will abide by the decisions of the majority though holding different beliefs; question all sources of authority reasonably – books or persons; use a manner of questioning authority that is intelligent; show respect for rank or status (while not being overly impressed).

APPENDIX B

VALUES, WORLD-WIDE

A full discussion of the following excerpt from a survey of [1]"Values, World-Wide".

[1]Paul Hanna, *Social Studies in the Elementary School*, Fifty-sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 40-44.

The values of democracy have received extensive treatment in educational literature. In fact, every major American educator has given consideration to these values, as

have our professional organizations. The Educational Policies Commission and the American Association of School Administrators have clearly set forth the relationship between school practices and the moral and spiritual values of democracy. In the volume *Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools*, the Educational Policies Commission lists one value as basic to other values.

> **The basic moral and spiritual value in American life is the supreme importance of the individual personality.**
>
> If the individual personality is supreme, each person should feel responsible for the consequences of his own conduct.
>
> If the individual personality is supreme, institutional arrangements are the servants of mankind.
>
> If the individual personality is supreme, mutual consent is better than violence.
>
> If the individual personality is supreme, the human mind should be liberated by access to information and opinion.
>
> If the individual personality is supreme, excellence in mind, character, and creative ability should be fostered.
>
> If the individual personality is supreme, all persons should be judged by the same moral standards.
>
> If the individual personality is supreme, the concepts of brotherhood should take precedence over selfish interests.
>
> If the individual personality is supreme, each person should have the greatest possible opportunity for the pursuit of happiness, provided only that such activities do not substantially interfere with the similar opportunities of others.
>
> If the individual personality is supreme, each person should be offered the emotional and spiritual experiences which transcend the materialistic aspects of life.

The sources cited to this point are by nature and definition most acceptable to the United States as a national community and to all component communities within the national community. But we live in an expanding world setting, and the schools must give attention to those world-held values that are consistent with democratic ethics. As one author has said, "What we need is a keener awareness of the kinship between all religions, and nowhere is this kinship so marked as on the ethical level. Men may differ grossly in what and how they worship, but not in why and how they believe they should behave." The Golden Rule, for instance, has been found to have the same meaning in all major religions. This is a major ethical value; one that deserves highest place among the citizenship objectives of the social studies.

An example of recent research on such values apparently common to most of mankind, cited also in the *Fifty-sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, is that by Virginia Woods, who sought to find a "common core of basic beliefs upon which all major denominations and religions agree." Woods selected a common core of moral and spiritual values from the literature of six major world religions. Each list of items making up this common core was found stated in equivalent terms within each religious group's literature. For example –

Christianity "As a man sows so shall he also reap." Galatians, 6:7.

Judaism "Sow to yourself in righteousness till the Lord come and gain righteousness upon you. If ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity." Hosea, 10:12.

Mohammedanism "Shall ye be recompensed but as ye have wrought?" 1:1306.

Hinduism "A man reaps that at that age at which he had sowed it at a previous birth." 1:122.

Buddhism "There is fruit and results of deed well done and ill done." 1:292.

Confucianism "He who loves and respects others is constantly loved and respected by them." 1:449.[2]

Twelve such lists of items - each from the Christian religion but supported in meaning by five other religions - were presented to forty-seven religious leaders representing all major denominational groups in the United States. Each list of items represented a value or values that might be used as objectives in public schools. The nine lists of items meeting with unanimous approval by all forty-seven evaluators were stated as follows.

A PROPOSED COMMON CORE OF SPIRITUAL AND MORAL VALUES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL USE

The Ten Commandments

1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."
2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . ."
3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain . . ."
4. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."
5. "Honor thy father and thy mother . . ."
6. "Thou shalt not kill."
7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery."
8. "Thou shalt not steal."
9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."
10. "Thou shalt not covet . . ."

Exodus 20: 3-17

The Two Commandments

1. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind;

2. and thy neighbor as thyself."

Luke 10:27

[2]Ibid., pp. 42. Virginia Newhall Woods quotes Robert Ballou, *The Bibles of the World* (New York: Viking Press, (1939)

The Golden Rule

". . . all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them . . ."

Matthew 7:12

The Beatitudes

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven."
2. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."
3. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."
4. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."
5. "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy."
6. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."
7. "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God."
8. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5: 3-10

A Prophet's Requirements

". . . What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Micah 6:8

The Fruits of the Spirit

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law."

Galatians 5: 22-23

For Meditation

"Finally bretheren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Philippians 4:8

For Prudence

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Galatians 6:7

For Faith

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Mark 8:36

APPENDIX C

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

General Statement of Belief

The staff of the _____ school system subscribe in general to the following policy statement.

"We believe that in a free society each individual is free to determine for himself what he wishes to read, view and hear, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group.

We further believe that the _____ school system should contribute to development of the social, intellectual, moral and spiritual values of the students.

Our schools are concerned with generating understanding of American freedoms and with the preservation of these freedoms through the development of informed and responsible citizens.

It is our belief that the students of the _____ schools should be provided with materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities and maturity levels of the pupils served.

We believe that materials should be provided that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards.

We believe that materials should be provided that will give various sides of controversial issues so that the young citizens may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical reading, viewing, listening and thinking.

We believe that materials should be provided that are representative of the many religious, ethnic and cultural groups and their contribution to our American heritage.

We believe we should place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the school.

Selection Procedures

All materials are carefully selected. We are living in a time of conflicting beliefs, diverse ideas and changing attitudes. The purpose of the school is to provide background information which will enable pupils to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives. The school shall provide materials on opposing or various sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical reading and thinking.

The selection of instructional materials shall be done cooperatively by professional personnel and the Media Committees in the school and the school system. Parents and students should also have knowledge of the selections and be heard if there are objections. The basic criteria for selection will be –

Needs of the school system based on knowledge of the curriculum and based on requests from administrators and teachers, jointly, or in each school;
Needs of the individual students based on abilities, interests and needs of school children and youth – and based on requests of parents and students;
Provision of a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with a diversity of appeal;
Provision of different points of view;
Provision of materials of high artistic and literary quality;
Provision of factual and reliable material.

The responsibility for coordinating the selection and making recommendations for the purchase of library media rests with the professionally trained library personnel. Professional personnel will be guided in their choices by personal examination, by reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared standard catalogs and other selection aides. They shall be further guided by a thorough knowledge of the library and school collection and amount of funds appropriated. The librarian with the assistance of the library media committee must exercise careful judgment in the decision to order books chosen from reading the reviews. In general, the reviews should be favorable; neutral or conflicting reviews, however, are problems of judgment. In fact, any review may be contrary to local professional judgment when the books finally arrive. An actual examination of the books may be suggested prior to ordering or before placing the materials on the library shelves. Final approval on all instructional orders from individual schools must be given by principals upon the recommendation of the school media committee.

Selection sources approved or suggested by the Georgia Department of Education are to be used for the purchase of those materials utilizing state funds. Purchases with local funds are the responsibility of the local media committees.

Programs for the "academically talented and advanced placement" students have made it necessary for schools to consider for purchase materials that may not have been previously considered. Adult titles are selected that are keyed to the young adults' needs as well as those that will stimulate new interests in cultural, economic, scientific and social fields. The inclusion of particular words, phrases and sentences do not prevent purchase provided the work represents a major contribution to a subject field and is within the ability of the pupil to handle. Since teenage readers vary widely in ability and background, the books selected for them will of necessity vary in content and reading difficulty, but all titles are purchased in the hope that they will lead to continued reading in adult fields on as high a level as possible for each individual.

Instructional materials, deemed restrictive, may, upon the request of the teacher of the related area and upon the approval of the librarian and the principal, be placed on reserve in the librarian's office. These books should be available to those who need them and can benefit from the use of them.

Procedures for Handling Questioned Materials

Criticisms of instructional materials that are in the _____ schools shall be submitted in writing to the individual school principal. It is suggested that the critic file and the complaint, on the attached form, will be submitted to the school media committee appointed by the principal. The books and/or materials involved will be suspended pending a final decision in writing by the appropriate authority.

Materials that are questioned should be read and analyzed first by the school media committee composed of at least the librarian, principal and two (2) appropriate subject field faculty members within the school. If no decision can be reached, appeal may be made to the system-wide media committee appointed by the Superintendent of Schools, consisting of the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Principals, Librarians and appropriate subject field classroom teachers. This committee will read and analyze the material and make a recommendation on its suitability to the Superintendent. The Local Board of Education has the final decision-making power.

APPENDIX D

TYPICAL FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM
(Adapted from "The Students' Right to Read," by The National Council of Teachers of English)

Author _____ Hardback _____ Paperback _____

Title _____

Publisher (if known) _____

Request initiated by _____

Telephone _____ Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

Complainant represents:

____ Himself
____ Name of Organization _____
____ Identify Other Group _____

1. To what in the book do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages)
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What do you feel might be the result of reading this book? _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. For what age group do you recommend this book? _____
   _____

4. Is there anything good about this book? _____
   _____

5. Did you read the entire book? _____ What parts? _____
   _____

6. Are you aware of the judgment of this book by literary critics? _____
   _____

7. What do you believe is the theme of this book? _____
   _____

8. What would you like your school to do about this book?
   _____ Do not assign it to my child.
   _____ Withdraw it from all students as well as from my child.
   _____ Send it back to the school office for re-evaluation.

9. In its place, what book of equal literary quality would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of our civilization?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signature of Complainant

_____

Date